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Letter dated 22 January 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

As you are aware, the Kingdom of Morocco hosted the twentieth session of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Marrakech on 17 and 18 January 2014.

This meeting was chaired by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in his capacity as Chairman of that Committee, in the presence of President Mahmoud Abbas, Head of State of Palestine, and was attended by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Committee and the Secretary General of OIC.

On the basis of the deliberations, the participants adopted a final communiqué (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as documents of the General Assembly, under agenda item 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed **Loulichki**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 22 January 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic, English and French]

Final Communiqué of the twentieth session of the Al-Quds Committee

Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco

15-16 Rabi' Al-Awwal 1435 AH (17 and 18 January 2014)

In response to a gracious invitation by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco and Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, the Committee of Al-Quds held its twentieth session in Marrakech, on 15 and 16 Rabi' Al-Awwal 1435 AH (17 and 18 January 2014), under the effective Chairmanship of His Majesty and in the presence of His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine.

The twentieth session of the Al-Quds Committee saw the participation of their Highnesses and Excellencies the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Committee's member countries along with their accompanying delegations, His Excellency Mr. Iyad Amine Madani, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Mr. Abdelkebir Alaoui Mdaghri, Director General of the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency.

The meeting was attended by international personalities invited, for the first time, as distinguished guests.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, opened the meeting by giving a speech wherein His Majesty emphasized the fact that the convening of this meeting clearly attested to the common desire of OIC member States to continue defending not only the legitimate rights of our Palestinian brothers, but also the Arab and Islamic character of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

His Majesty also considered that the defence of the occupied city was not a transient matter, nor was this defence limited to convening Committee meetings. On the contrary, the Committee's action included effective diplomatic initiatives as well as tangible fieldwork in the Holy City, carried out by the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency, which was affiliated with the Al-Quds Committee.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, also added that faced with the situation that Al-Quds was undergoing, we must consolidate Arab and Islamic joint action, close ranks and adopt innovative measures to effectively contribute to substantiating the desire for peace, calling for a pragmatic, efficient strategy, in which the Al-Quds Committee would play a crucial role as a permanent mechanism of OIC.

In this regard, His Majesty stressed the fact that Al-Quds was the core of the Palestinian issue, and that no peace was conceivable without an agreement on the final status of East Jerusalem as the capital of the independent Palestinian State.

Afterwards, His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian State, gave an address wherein he thanked His Majesty King Mohammed VI for having invited the Al-Quds Committee to convene at this critical conjuncture, when

Al-Quds Al-Sharif, together with its Muslim and Christian holy sites, continued to undergo Judaization, alteration of its geographical and demographic character and isolation of the Holy City as a whole from its Arab and Islamic environment. His Excellency also called for exerting all possible efforts to save the Holy City from the ferocious aggressions of the Israeli occupation, stressing that Al-Quds was threatened and that the situation required a response, without delay or postponement.

His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, submitted to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, an official document prepared by the State of Palestine containing a list of violations perpetrated by the occupying Israeli authorities in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Foreign Ministers of the Al-Quds Committee member countries held an interactive meeting with the aforementioned international guests in order to explain the situation in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and underscore the responsibility of the international community in preserving the legal status of the city and in safeguarding its role and status, in compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

In the light of the deliberations undertaken by the Committee's members, under the effective Chairmanship of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Committee came to the following conclusions:

The Committee:

1. Reaffirms that Al-Quds Al-Sharif remains a central cause for the Islamic Ummah, since it constitutes the ground of any political solution. It also reasserts the fact that any infringement upon the Holy City and the Al-Aqsa Mosque would have serious consequences for the region and is likely to exacerbate the existing tensions, violence and despair in the region and undermine any chances of achieving peace.

2. Reiterates the fact that OIC member States are striving for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace solution in the Middle East, in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy and based on the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map provisions, so that the Palestinian people may be able to establish their sovereign, independent and geographically contiguous State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

3. Considers that Palestinian-Israeli peace talks, resumed since July 2013, constitute a significant milestone in the efforts to reach peace, in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy and the adopted peacekeeping operations guidelines. In this respect, it should like to emphasize the importance of confronting all actions that are at variance with peace as a goal and serve only to perpetuate and entrench the occupation, which has been in place for 46 years.

4. Condemns and disapproves the fait accompli-based policy adopted by the Israeli occupation authorities in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, as well as all their aggressive and illegal practices that purport to alter the legal status of the Holy City, as well as its civilization features and demographic composition, by harassing the Palestinians through the withdrawal of their identification cards and the demolition of their houses, by forcing them to abandon their homes and through ongoing settlement

activities and land confiscations, as well as the construction of the wall in order to besiege and isolate Al-Quds Al-Sharif from its natural Palestinian environment.

5. Rejects the decisions taken by the occupation authorities to deny worshippers' access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and to allow Jewish extremists to enter the Mosque's precincts and desecrate them. It also rejects the continuous excavations in and around the Mosque and the introduction of alterations to the Mosque for the purpose of changing it from what it was before the occupation, including unlawful attempts to divide it between Muslims and Jews, temporally and spatially, in preparation for its takeover and consideration as one of the Jewish holy sites.

6. Calls upon the international community to raise collective awareness about Al-Quds, considering that any State, institution, organization, community or individual seeking to preserve the identity of Al-Quds Al-Sharif as a historic symbol is an active contributor to building peace and ensuring the conditions for its achievement, thus furthering the agenda of those who endeavour towards it. The Committee also urges the international community to assume its full responsibility in safeguarding Al-Quds, caring for the human, civilizational and international heritage it represents, protecting education, the population and culture in the Holy City and pressuring Israel to cease all occupation practices aimed at changing the legal status of the Holy City.

7. Confirms that the Israeli activities constitute a continuous violation of Security Council resolutions, which have considered that those activities in Al-Quds Al-Sharif are void and without effect and must be suspended immediately.

8. Calls upon the international community as a whole to assume its responsibilities and press Israel to stop its illegal settlements, its violations of the Palestinian people's rights, its provocative advertisements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, as well as the statements and illegal claims by some of its officials on the annexation of Al-Quds, along with its Islamic and Christian holy sites. All of this is for the purpose of creating the right climate for the success of the resumed peace talks and the attainment of a just and comprehensive solution based on a two-State option, whereby the State of Palestine and Israel could live side by side, as this will contribute to building normal peaceful relations between Israel, its neighbours and the Islamic world, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative.

9. Confirms its support of the Palestinian position in the resumed peace talks. It hails the serious role of the United States of America, sponsor of these negotiations, which ought to decide on all final settlement issues, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif at the top, by considering it as the capital of the State of Palestine, on the basis of a well-defined time schedule and pursuant to resolutions of international legitimacy. Likewise, it stresses the importance of the consultations that the State of Palestine will lead with the Committee Chairmanship and its appeal to contribute to what concerns the future of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

10. Hails the positive impact of the efforts undertaken by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, in order to protect the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and to urge States to refrain from making any compromises in favour of the occupation or do anything likely to undermine the legal status of the Holy City.

11. Welcomes the guiding principles, as adopted by the European Union, which deny Israeli entities in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the rest of the Palestinian territories occupied since June 1967 the right to receive any grants or financial instruments emanating from the European Union. It calls upon the European Union to abide by these guidelines and to play a more effective role in opposing the Judaization of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

12. Emphasizes the importance of Christian churches as an essential component of the diverse cultural heritage of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, hails the role of these institutions in facing the process of Judaization of the Holy City and calls for strengthening this role and following it through.

13. Urges the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to continue its efforts to preserve the heritage of Al-Quds, as a humanity heritage site and a symbol of coexistence between cultures and faiths. It also calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to facilitate the implementation of the World Heritage Committee resolution that provides for the sending of a joint delegation from the World Heritage Centre and UNESCO technical advisory bodies to control and monitor the Israeli excavations in and around the old city of Al-Quds and its walls, by virtue of being an endangered world heritage.

14. Deplores the persistence of Israel, the occupying Power, in closing Palestinian institutions in Al-Quds, especially Bayt-Al-Sharq, and calls upon all OIC member States and upon the international community to take practical measures to put pressure on Israel to get the latter to reopen these institutions and to provide a platform for an official Palestinian presence in Jerusalem.

15. Calls upon the Security Council to pay necessary attention to the escalating tensions and to the critical situation in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and to assume its responsibilities, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council related to Al-Quds Al-Sharif, especially resolutions 242 (1967), 252 (1968), 267 (1969), 338 (1973), 465 (1980), 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 1073 (1996), by holding an extraordinary session to discuss the critical situation in the city as a result of continuous and serious Israeli violations of sacrosanct Islamic and Christian landmarks as well as the Israeli Government's disregard of the resolutions related thereto and wilful denial of its responsibilities as an occupying Power.

16. Invites OIC member countries to intervene vis-à-vis other countries and urge them to mend their votes within international organizations regarding decisions related to Al-Quds, in order to make them conformant with both international law and the international community consensus regarding the legal status of the city.

17. Reiterates its appeal to all States to keep rejecting any attempt made by Israel, the occupying Power, to annex the eastern part of Al-Quds, and to abide by their legal obligations in such a way as to oblige their respective governmental, non-governmental and private bodies not to recognize any act supporting the settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and contributing to the consolidation of occupation. In this regard, the Committee calls for taking legal actions, in line with international law, against all individuals, institutions and international companies that work directly or indirectly for the benefit of the occupation system, in compliance with international law.

18. Invites OIC member States to adhere, in accordance with the Organization's Charter, to the adoption of the resolutions specific to the Palestinian question and to vote in their favour, specifically those concerning Al-Quds Al-Sharif, in international forums, including the United Nations General Assembly and UNESCO.

19. Praises the role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the protection of the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Al-Quds Al-Sharif assumed by His Majesty King Abdullah II, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and welcomes the agreement concluded on 31 March 2013 between His Majesty and His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine.

20. Invites the Permanent Delegates of OIC member States with the United Nations bodies to follow up on the issue of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and to expend all their efforts to guarantee the compliance by Israel, the occupying Power, with international laws, relevant United Nations resolutions and the will of the international community, including the emphasis on rejecting any submission of credentials by occupation authority representatives from Al-Quds.

21. Recommends that the General Secretariat of OIC develop practical mechanisms to implement and follow up on the resolutions emanating from the summits and sessions of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers related to Al-Quds. Likewise, it invites the General Secretariat to start to arrange visits in coordination with the Chairmanship of the Al-Quds Committee and in consultation with the chairmanship of the Summit and the State of Palestine. These visits are to be made by the Ministerial Communication Group, which was set up by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers during its fortieth session (Conakry, 11 December 2013), in order for the Group to be able to speedily convey to the international community a message emanating from the Organization concerning the need to protect Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

22. Welcomes the official document prepared by the State of Palestine containing a list of violations perpetrated by the occupying Israeli authorities in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

23. Hails the outcome of the new approach adopted by the Al-Quds Committee over the past 12 years, focusing on direct and tangible support, well-defined and purposeful political initiatives and responsiveness to the urgent and ongoing humanitarian needs of the population in order to help them stay in their homeland and undertake any works and field projects in Al-Quds Al-Sharif to face the Judaization policies practised by the Israeli occupation authorities in the Holy City in order to alter its Arab, Muslim and Christian identity and features.

24. Reasserts that the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency, established in 1998 within the framework of OIC, is the Organization's ideal institutional instrument and executive arm upon which the Al-Quds Committee relies in carrying out the tasks it is entrusted with, most notably the monitoring of the implementation of the Organization's resolutions bearing on the preservation of the Arab and Islamic city of Al-Quds and its civilization heritage.

25. Commends the means put by OIC member States at the disposal of the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency, particularly by the Kingdom of Morocco, which has contributed during the last five years as much as 80 per cent of the Agency's budget, to carry out concrete projects for the benefit of Al-Quds and its

population, especially in the social, health-care, cultural and educational sectors and in the area related to the restoration of historical monuments of the Holy City, mainly the Al-Aqsa Mosque and its facilities.

26. Invites all member States and financial institutions to provide the necessary material support to the Agency to help it live up to the aspirations of the Islamic Governments and peoples in defending Al-Quds Al-Sharif in the field.

27. Expresses satisfaction that the fourth session of the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif "Trusteeship Committee" and the second session of the Agency's Board of Directors coincide with the twentieth session of the Al-Quds Committee, held in Marrakech, and welcomes the reports submitted to it by the two reporting bodies of the Agency, including its 2014-2018 five-year projects plan, with a budget of $30 million, and calls upon OIC member States to contribute to this budget.

28. Notes with satisfaction that the aforementioned plan is in line with, and complementary to, the Strategic Plan to support Vital Sectors in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, as adopted by the fourth session of the extraordinary summit (held in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on 15 August 2012), and also notes that the role of the Agency in its implementation was acknowledged by the donors' conference, held in Baku on 11 June 2013.

29. Confirms that, in parallel with the political efforts made by the Committee, support to the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency's field work is of paramount importance in alleviating the sufferings of the population of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the first line of defence of Al-Quds, which is subject to oppression, discrimination and depopulation in their worst forms, and in defending the Holy City, through the major and medium-sized projects it intends to carry out in the following areas of housing, social and educational compounds, historical site restoration, land and real estate purchase, scholarships and health-care equipment in order to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of Al-Quds dwellers, especially women and young people, to support their steadfast resistance, and to maintain the spiritual and cultural landmarks of this wrested-away city.

30. Calls for examining the possibility to put in place a "waqf" and to move to compulsory contributions of OIC member States that will be determined by the States to support the budget of Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its projects.

31. Calls for launching grass-roots donation campaigns in OIC member States to support Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

32. Calls upon OIC member States to organize visits at various levels to Al-Quds Al-Sharif, prompting them to encourage Arab and Muslim businessmen's actual contributions in support of the Holy City, and calls for promoting cooperation between civil society players in the member States and international bodies and stakeholders that are advocating the just cause of Al-Quds.

33. Calls for the proclamation of Al-Quds as the Islamic Culture Capital and prompts the General Secretariat to develop an information strategy designed to unveil Israeli schemes and violations of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and debunk misinformation campaigns on the city's location and history in some media circles, thereby contributing to raising international public awareness of the need to maintain Al-Quds as a world heritage site and a symbol of peace and coexistence.

34. Hails the ongoing consultation and long-standing coordination between the Committee's Chairmanship and the State of Palestine. It entrusts the Chairmanship of the Committee, after consultation with the Presidency of the Palestinian State, to convene meetings at the appropriate level, whenever the need arises, for the purposes of following up on the implementation of the recommendations and all the daily and pressing issues related to the status of Al-Quds and submitting the relevant recommendations to the Chairmanship.

35. Salutes the unswerving resistance of the heroic Palestinian people, especially the steadfast children of Al-Quds. It emphasizes its support to them and to their legitimate struggle to fulfil their just national rights with the establishment of an independent State of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital at the top of the list.

36. Expresses its heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco and Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, for his noble positions and tireless efforts to defend Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its holy sites, and extends to His Majesty, to the Government and to the people of Morocco its sincere thanks and appreciation for the warm welcome and generous hospitality granted to the participating delegations.